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Vancouver real estate tactics could be costing 'hundreds of millions' in lost taxes, say NDP

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JENNIFER GAUTHIER/METRO FILE

Canada 'depending on B.C. to perform'

LEGISLATURE

Premier Clark talks balanced budget, growth ahead of speech

Premier Christy Clark says her government is returning to the legislature determined to stick to its big-picture goals of pursuing a liquefied-natural-gas industry and completing the $9-billion Site C hydroelectric dam.

The Liberal government will lay out its plans in Tuesday's throne speech, just 15 months away from the next election. Clark's promises from the last election of a liquefied-natural-gas bonanza haven't been realized so far, but the premier said B.C. is still the top performing economy in the country.

She said British Columbians can expect a fourth-consecutive balanced budget presented later this month and targeted funding for health, social and housing initiatives, but with the overriding perspective of steady growth.

The Royal Bank forecasts B.C.'s economy to lead Canada's growth rate this year at 3.1 per cent and 2.9 per cent in 2017. The B.C. government has forecast growth at 2.4 per cent this year.

Clark said those predictions are an added responsibility as other jurisdictions struggle with downturns and job losses.

"Canada really is depending on B.C. to perform because none of the other provinces are really able to make big contributions in terms of jobs and national revenues," she said.

The government is not prepared to take huge risks during uncertain economic times, she said.

"We will be making some new investments, frankly we haven't been able to make for a few years. You are going to see some things in the budget like support for home buyers in the Lower Mainland."

The government has said it was examining changing the thresholds for the property-purchase tax in order to help more first-time home buyers enter the market in Metro Vancouver where the average price for single-family detached homes in Greater Vancouver reached over $1.2 million.

Opposition New Democrat Leader John Horgan said Clark's endorsements of B.C.'s economy on the national stage are not enthralling ordinary British Columbians.

"When people turn on the legislative channel and they hear the premier crowing about how great things are going, they say, 'Where does she live? She doesn't live in my neighbourhood,'" said Horgan.

THE CANADIAN PRESS

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Group seeks to 'kill, harm and harass' two threatened species. **Canada**

An app for the disadvantaged

LINKVAN.CA

Downtown Eastside folk get a leg up in service-finding

Matt Kieltyka
Metro | Vancouver

Access to technology in Vancouver's Downtown Eastside (DTES) shouldn't be a contentious issue, says an advocate who helped launch a new social service finder app in the community this month.

LinkVan.ca, a web app that geo-locates the nearest DTES services for many needs, is now live — thanks to a collaboration between the DTES Literacy Roundtable, the University of British Columbia Learning Exchange and computer programmer Kevin Tanyag.

William Booth, co-ordinator at the DTES Literacy Roundtable, said the simple tool allows anyone to find any service and, instantly, access critical information to the many resources located within the neighbourhood.

For example, someone seeking shelter will be given a full list of nearby bed spaces.

Choosing a specific one from the list will bring up operating hours, capacity, phone numbers and special notes such as whether the shelter provides food and showers, or permits shopping carts or pets.

LinkVan.ca allows users to access the Downtown Eastside services nearest to them. JEFF HODSON/METRO

The app was developed through several community roundtables and was tested with trial runs in the community.

"We had no idea about doing an app at first," said Booth, "but there was a consensus from both the community members and service providers that people wanted to have a centralized source of information."

An app seemed like the best option.

What Booth didn't expect was to be defending the need for such an initiative to people from outside the Downtown Eastside.

"The perception is that people in the Downtown Eastside don't have access to technology.

"And if they do, how is it they can afford it if they're on welfare?" Booth said of the skepticism he encountered.

"That attitude needs to change."

In an increasingly digital world, computer literacy is absolutely necessary, said Booth.

"If people need to do anything in terms of government support these days, it has to be on the computer, so they need that literacy," said Booth.

"Access to technology wasn't as big of a problem as once thought (when the app was being developed). People do have some form of ... technology available to them. It may not be the latest model, or they may not have a contract, but it's there."

Strides have been made to bridge the so-called digital divide that threatens to further marginalize people who would otherwise be unable to afford connecting online.

Many organizations provide devices and opportunities to access the Internet.

The Vancouver Public Library has a program that allows e-readers to be lent out to residents, and hosts free tech cafés to teach people how to use the devices.

Recently, organizers of the DTES Street Market have been installing free public Wi-Fi hot spots throughout the neighbourhood for users who can't afford data plans.

And Booth said the city's expansion of free public Wi-Fi hot spots, one specifically at Carnegie Hall at Main and Hastings streets, will further increase the usefulness of tools like LinkVan.ca.

Meanwhile, ACORN Canada, an advocacy group for low- and moderate-income residents, has been lobbying the Canadian Radio-television and Telecommunications Commission to provide a subsidized $10-a-month Internet plan for qualifying low-income families, as the regulator prepares for a review of the country's telecommunications industry this spring.

> **Access to technology wasn't as big of a problem as once thought.**
> William Booth of DTES Literacy Roundtable

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New sobering centre planned

HEALTH

Facility is a response to 2009 inquiry suggestions

A sketch of Frank Paul from The Davies Commission of Inquiry into his death. THE CANADIAN PRESS

Health officials in Vancouver are planning a new "sobering centre" seven years after it was recommended by an inquiry into the death of a severely intoxicated homeless man, but some advocates and family members say it still falls short.

Vancouver Coastal Health has begun planning a facility where police could take people who are drunk or high on drugs instead of a jail cell. It will be attached to a new detox centre, to replace an aging building that already contains a small sobering unit of about five to 10 beds.

A stand-alone sobering centre was recommended in 2009 after an inquiry into the death of Frank Paul. In 1998, the 47-year-old aboriginal man was refused entry to Vancouver's jail and police dumped him in an alley, where he died of hypothermia within hours.

"I am disappointed to hear about the building not being a stand-alone," said Peggy Clement, Paul's cousin. "It looks like the government is trying to put a Band-Aid on just to say that they did something on the inquiry recommendations."

Advocates say Vancouver Coastal Health has taken too long to act on the recommendation and chronically addicted people may not want to go to a sobering centre inside a detox facility. But the health authority says it's best to unite addiction services under one roof.

Andrew MacFarlane, a director of mental health and substance use at Vancouver Coastal Health, said he hopes the new site will be built within the next five years and will include sobering, detox, research and outpatient withdrawal management.

When a person arrives at the sobering centre, a nurse will assess them immediately and monitor them over a period of about 24 hours. Once sober, they will be offered the opportunity to go into more intensive programming, he said.

"Having them co-located on the same site facilitates a smoother hand-off. They're familiar with the site, they're familiar with the staff and they can begin their recovery journey in a supportive environment."

Asked why the authority was apparently taking action now on a 2009 recommendation, MacFarlane said it had been in the works for years but it was important to carefully consider all the different components in treating addiction.

More recently, Vancouver Coastal Health has been prompted by a need to replace the 60-year-old Vancouver Detox building on the city's east side, he said. THE CANADIAN PRESS

> "It looks like the government is trying to put a Band-Aid on."
> Peggy Clement

STUDY

Stigma biggest hurdle for sex workers leaving the industry

When Cheryl's manager discovered the 38-year-old used to work in the sex trade, she says he joked that a name plate on her desk read "pubic relations."

Kayla, 61, was in a new job too when she says a police officer informed a colleague she had formerly been a "prostitute and a junkie." She lost the job and saw no option but returning to the sex industry.

Both women encountered the degrading treatment when they attempted to leave sex work for new occupations, an obstacle that a recently published study calls the "w— stigma." The women were among 22 Vancouver sex workers interviewed for a peer-reviewed article in the Canadian Review of Sociology.

The women, whose names were changed in the study to protect their identities, reported challenges from name calling to violence, identifying the stigma they faced as the most challenging barrier to leaving the sex trade, said researcher Raven Bowen, who studied criminology at Simon Fraser University in Burnaby.

"It's like there's no escape from this," said Bowen, whose study was published in November.

"Sex workers would expect from predators this hate speech and this rage and all that stuff. But they wouldn't necessarily expect it from a co-worker five years after they transitioned out of the industry." THE CANADIAN PRESS

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Shady realtors cheating government, MLA alleges

REAL ESTATE

Same home but multiple commissions, David Eby says

Neal Hall
For Metro | Vancouver

Alleged "insider trading" real-estate practices in Vancouver could be costing the provincial government more than $100 million a year in lost tax revenue, MLA David Eby said Monday.

The NDP's housing critic alleged during a news conference that some realtors are involved in "insider trading" by assigning sales to others, including other realtors, three or four times before the deal finally closes four to six months later.

The realtor "collects two, three or four commissions on a single sale," Eby said, adding the law says the property purchase tax is supposed to be paid on every sale, but the sale of the assignments in a short period of time, known as "flipping," is being done privately.

He cited an investigation by The Globe and Mail published Saturday that found the original buyer was paid much less than the house was eventually sold for after being flipped several times.

NDP housing critic David Eby holds up an advertisement by New Coast Realty. NEAL HALL/FOR METRO

"I think it's quite widespread, but it's hard to detect," he said in an interview, adding such tactics could be costing the provincial government "tens or hundreds of millions of dollars in tax revenue."

Eby said he met last December with a realtor who had another concern — people buying homes have a realtor fill out mandatory forms for the Financial Transactions and Reports Analysis Centre of Canada (FINTRAC), a federal agency that detects money-laundering, but list their realtor's or mortgage broker's local address, thereby concealing the foreign client's residency and the source of the money.

He said local buyers are considered low risk, while foreign buyers are considered higher risk, so listing a local address deceives the anti-money-laundering legislation.

"This kind of conduct is corrosive to real-estate agents," Eby said, adding such conduct negatively affects the reputation of all realtors.

Some realty firms are taking advantage of rich foreign buyers wanting to invest in Vancouver's hot real-estate market, Eby said, holding up an article by New Coast Realty with the headline "Chinese Anti-corruption Policy and Vancouver Housing Prices."

He said he has twice written letters to the self-regulating Real Estate Council of B.C. to investigate allegations of realtors assisting clients in money-laundering and concealing foreign money, but the council has said that without specific names of realtors, there is nothing to investigate.

"Oversight of the real-estate industry is woefully inadequate," Eby said. "The provincial government has been asleep at the switch on this."

Eby called on the provincial government to launch an arm's-length investigation into the detailed allegations contained in recent media reports, including one that quoted testimony under oath at the B.C. Securities Commission.

He said he plans to raise the matter in the legislature, which reconvenes Tuesday in Victoria.

IN BRIEF

Police arrest driver in bizarre hit-and-run

A 35-year-old man faces several charges after a bizarre hit-and-run in Pemberton on Saturday.

Witnesses reported seeing a pick-up truck hit a female pedestrian on Highway 99 at around 11:15 a.m.

Police allege the driver then got out of the truck, put the pedestrian in the truck and drove away.

Thanks to photos taken at the scene by witnesses, police were able to track down the truck and suspect a day later at his home in Port Douglas.

RCMP say it appears to be a domestic incident.

The female pedestrian was also found in the home. She suffered minor injuries in the collision.

METRO

Firefighters save dog found in burning home

A Vancouver family's pet dog is expected to survive after being rescued from a burning home.

Crews were called to a house in East Vancouver around midnight Sunday when the homeowners returned to find smoke coming out of a second-floor window.

Firefighters found a dog inside the building suffering from smoke inhalation and modified an oxygen mask to fit the animal's face.

They spent more than 20 minutes trying to revive the dog, and eventually it came around.

THE CANADIAN PRESS

Newlyweds refuse to accept defeat

HEALTH CARE

Couple raising money for costly cancer treatment in U.S.

Thandi Fletcher
Metro | Vancouver

Vancouver couple Michelle and Brandon Durieux tied the knot Oct. 18, the day after finding out that Brandon, who was diagnosed with an aggressive form of leukemia, was no longer responding to chemotherapy. PHOTOS CONTRIBUTED/MICHELLE DURIEUX

A Vancouver newlywed whose husband was diagnosed with an aggressive form of leukemia says she isn't about to give up fighting for his life.

Michelle and Brandon Durieux tied the knot on Oct. 18, but it was a bittersweet ceremony for the young couple that have faced more heartache in their marriage than most face in a lifetime.

"It's been a really trying six months of treatments," Michelle, 25, told Metro. "We're just being as positive as we can at this point and trying to look at the bright side of things."

Last August, Brandon was diagnosed with acute myeloid leukemia, an aggressive form of cancer that affects the blood and bone marrow. After two rounds of chemotherapy and an experimental drug trial at Vancouver General Hospital, doctors told Brandon earlier this year that he had exhausted all treatment options available here.

"The drug trial was really the last thing they could do," said Michelle. "They said there's really nothing else they could offer except for comfort care to try to slow down the progression of the cancer."

Unwilling to accept defeat, the couple is hoping specialized treatment in Houston, Texas, might offer hope.

The couple's love story began five years in Texas, where Michelle previously lived.

The pair met on the Internet while playing the popular video game World of Warcraft. After three years of online communication, Michelle eventually decided to travel to Victoria, where Brandon was living at the time, and they quickly fell in love.

"We just hit it off right away and really connected," she said. "I was here for a week and just fell in love with him. I knew I didn't want that to be the end of us."

Michelle, who said she had a lifelong fascination with marine biology, decided to apply to the University of Victoria and was accepted into the program. She moved to Victoria soon after, and the happy couple continued to grow closer.

> **We're just being as positive as we can at this point and trying to look at the bright side of things.**
> Michelle Durieux

But last summer, Brandon, who was working as a landscaper, started to complain of fatigue and noticed unexplained dark bruises on his skin.

One day, the couple was watching an episode of TV comedy Scrubs, in which a character on the popular show had been was diagnosed with leukemia.

"The guy on the episode was experiencing the same things," Michelle recalled. "Brandon looked at me and said, 'Wouldn't it be crazy if I had leukemia?'"

Soon after, a concerned Brandon went to see a doctor, who ordered a blood test. Within hours, he was told to go to the hospital. He received a diagnosis the same day. Brandon was sent to Vancouver General Hospital, where he underwent two rounds of chemotherapy.

While in hospital, Michelle proposed and the couple started planning their wedding.

The day before they were planning on getting married, doctors told him that the second round of chemotherapy hadn't worked.

"His doctors just said, 'Right now we think it's important for you to get out and celebrate your wedding," she said.

On Oct. 18, they tied the knot surrounded by a small group of family and friends in a backyard ceremony at Brandon's mother's house in White Rock. They passed around a bottle of hand sanitizer to protect Brandon's compromised immune system.

"It was just perfect," said Michelle. "Everything came together so wonderfully it was like we had been planning it for months."

Soon after the ceremony, Brandon was put on a drug trial. At first, his blood counts slowly improved and he seemed to be heading into remission. But a few weeks later, the couple's hopes were dashed when the cancer came back.

When the drug started to put stress on his liver, Brandon was taken off the drug, which had been his last hope here.

On Monday, the couple travelled to Houston, Texas, to meet with doctors at the MD Anderson Cancer Center, where they hope to find out if Brandon is eligible for any drug trials that aren't available in Canada. But treatment doesn't come cheap. With his first consultation alone expected to cost about $37,000 US, Michelle said his treatment would likely run in the hundreds of thousands of dollars. The cost will likely not be covered by B.C.'s Medical Services Plan.

A B.C. Ministry of Health spokeswoman said Friday that out-of-country treatment that is considered experimental or still in the research stage is not eligible for coverage.

To help cover the cost of Brandon's treatment, Michelle recently started a GoFundMe campaign. As of Friday, the campaign has raised more than $50,000. Friends and family are also helping, planning fundraising events and a bottle drive to help contribute.

Michelle said she is speechless to see how much the community is rallying around her and Brandon.

"I'm just truly touched," she said. "I could never say thank you enough to everyone."

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This image on a militant website shows fighters in Syria. THE CANADIAN PRESS/THE ASSOCIATED PRESS FILE

Canada to end ISIL bombing mission

MIDDLE EAST

Trudeau says size of training troops to triple

Canada is sending more than 100 soldiers to northern Iraq to train local fighters to combat Islamic State of Iraq and the Levant (ISIL) extremists, a mission that officials concede carries additional risks but is vital to bringing stability to the troubled nation.

Prime Minister Justin Trudeau on Monday took the wraps off the long-awaited change to Canada's fight against ISIL, one that switches tactics from combat to training, diplomacy and humanitarian aid. Trudeau said the bombing missions by CF-18 fighter jets will end by Feb. 22.

"While airstrike operations can be very useful to achieve short-term military and territorial gains, they do not on their own achieve long-term stability," he said.

Instead, Trudeau unveiled a mission billed as "refocused," "more effective" and better able to "capitalize on the strength of Canada's military." And it's a longer mission, too, as the Liberals extended it for another two years.

"I'm extremely confident that this mission not only is better than our last mission, but is the right thing to do," Trudeau said.

As part of the changes, Canada will triple the contingent of soldiers now in northern Iraq to just over 200 to train local fighters so that "kilometre by kilometre, they can reclaim their homes, their land and their future," Trudeau said.

The Conservative government deployed 69 special operations forces soldiers in the fall of 2014 to help train local forces.

The prime minister said the troops will be in an "advise and assist" non-combat role. But Gen. Jonathan Vance, the chief of defence staff, made clear that the role doesn't mean no risk, as troops will accompany their Kurdish counterparts to the frontlines, engage in firefights and even call in airstrikes.

Canada will also provide an extra $1 billion to help refugees and assist countries in the region cope with the humanitarian crises. TORSTAR NEWS SERVICE

WILDLIFE

Developer asks to 'kill, harm'

A request by an Ottawa development group to be allowed to "kill, harm and harass" two threatened species and destroy a butternut tree habitat on its land has garnered attention.

Kanata Lakes North Development Group put in a request for an "overall benefit permit" to the Ministry of Natural Resources and Forestry asking for permission to:

- Remove up to 120 butternut trees (endangered) on the 140 hectare site and damage and destroy the habitat of these trees;
- Kill, harm and harass Blanding's turtles (threatened) and destroy up to 124 hectares of Blanding's turtle habitat;
- Kill, harm and harass Least bitterns (threatened) and damage up to 10.9 hectares of their habitat in order to construct a residential development.

KNL's project would kill threatened Blanding's turtles like this one. TORSTAR NEWS SERVICE

While this drew alarm from residents and city councillor Marianne Wilkinson, Ministry of Natural Resources and Forestry employee Scott Lee said the application is unremarkable.

"If they weren't looking to impact a species at risk, then they wouldn't require a permit ... from us," said Lee.

However, what further alarmed residents like Mario Poirier, a member of the Ottawa Duck Club and wetland supporter, is that KNL's application doesn't say how it will achieve an overall benefit for the species.

The permit will only be given if the proponent can show that not only is the impact minimized, but that there is an overall benefit for the species, said Lee.

It is only after the comment stage that the ministry extracts promises from the proponent before a permit is given.

While impacts to the species on site have to be minimized, "overall benefit" can happen in different ways, including some of the ways KNL has mentioned. ADAM KVETON/METROLAND MEDIA

Diner's wall a who's who

NEW HAMPSHIRE PRIMARY

Staff recalls run-ins with would-be U.S. presidents

These diner waitresses carry anecdotes of presidential candidates like so many plates of barbecued steak tips and Hungry Boy Specials.

The wall of pictures attests to the famous names who have wandered into MaryAnn's Diner over the years: Bill Clinton, Al Gore, Rudy Giuliani, John McCain, Chris Christie and, just the other day, Jeb and Barbara Bush.

While scarfing down a corned-beef hash, a customer says he saw Hillary Clinton twice in the same day last week.

Welcome to New Hampshire.

Being a small state that hosts an early primary means that, every fourth February, residents see their main streets, eateries and high-school gyms inundated with people aspiring to lead the free world.

The women reminisce about their all-time favourite customer. It's a landslide: the 42nd president, who worked table after table and then, when he was finished, went outside and did the same thing down the block.

"Bill Clinton," said manager Linda Guilnet, who's worked at the diner since its 1989 opening.

"He just went around to everybody. Then took a walk outside. He went down to the lights and came back."

Another waitress says former first lady Barbara Bush was there with the latest family member to seek the presidency. Jeb seemed all right, they said. But his mom was a delight.

A few towns away, another New Hampshirite is less impressed that Bush hauled out the family. Ari Pollack says he's been considering voting for Bush but thinks leaning on mom smacks slightly of desperation.

Some will be thrilled to see it conclude. The waitresses complain about media cameras bumping into customers.

Pollack is less cynical. He says his state has an important responsibility: "We're making a decision for the rest of the nation. To at least help narrow the field, to put some candidates in front of the rest of the nation that have been vetted," he said.

THE CANADIAN PRESS

The entrance of MaryAnn's Diner showing photos of past presidential candidates.

ALEX PANETTA/THE CANADIAN PRESS

SYRIA

Love in the time of war

Badly damaged buildings in the war-ravaged Syrian city of Homs are the setting of a young couple's wedding pictures.

Newlyweds Nada Merhi, 18, and her husband, Syrian army soldier Hassan Youssef, 27, posed for a series of pictures on Feb. 5 among the ruins of what is left of Homs' streets and buildings after years of civil war.

Merhi wore a traditional white wedding gown. Youssef, a soldier in Syrian President Bashar Assad's army, according to multiple media outlets, wore a military uniform.

The Washington Post identified the Syrian wedding photographer as Jafar Meray. He used the destruction of Homs to his advantage "to show that life is stronger than death," according to AFP photographer Joseph Eid, who accompanied the couple and Meray on the shoot.

This isn't the first wedding that has been photographed among Homs' rubble. According to the Washington Post, Meray photographed another married couple late last year. On his Facebook page, he explained that the photographs were proof that "life goes on, silently."

Homs, located about 160 kilometres north of the capital, Damascus, was once the country's third-largest city, with a population of more than 600,000. But after the city became a rebel stronghold in 2011, it was hit by a military assault by government forces.

TORSTAR NEWS SERVICE

1 Newly wed Syrian couple Nada Merhi, 18, and Hassan Youssef, 27, have their wedding pictures taken in a heavily damaged building in the war-ravaged city of Homs on Feb. 5. A Syrian photographer is using the destruction to show that life is stronger than death.

2 Hassan offers Nada a bouquet of flowers as she salutes him in the midst of destruction.

3 Nada and Hassan embrace one another.

JOSEPH EID/AFP/GETTY IMAGES

TECHNOLOGY

Cockroach-inspired bots could save people's lives

The little cockroach, among nature's most gross and reviled creatures, could soon be saving lives. Well, a cockroach-inspired robot, that is.

A study published Monday in the journal Proceedings of the National Academy of Sciences says robots that mimic cockroaches could help search-and-rescue missions find survivors of disasters. These cockroach robots could also help detect gas leaks or inspect infrastructure, the study says.

"Cockroaches are fascinating," said Robert Full, a biologist at the University of California, Berkeley, and one of the study's authors.

Full and Kaushik Jayaram, a post-doctoral engineering student at Harvard University, and the other author of the study, built an obstacle course filled with crevices for the bug and found it was able to slip through gaps a quarter its standing height and could withstand loads of nearly 900 times its body weight.

Using their findings as inspiration, the two researchers built a palm-sized, soft-legged robot.

The prototype took about two years and just $100 in materials to build. TORSTAR NEWS SERVICE

An American cockroach atop a compressible robot.

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Shoppers check out the Nordstrom store in Calgary. The U.S. retailer is expanding its presence in Canada with three new locations in Toronto this year and next. TORSTAR NEWS SERVICE

Stores battle for luxury shoppers

RETAIL

Clothing sector faces challenging years ahead

Industry watchers say Canada's retail clothing sector is expected to slow in the coming few years, even though the battle for luxury shoppers is revving up.

After two years of growth approaching four per cent, sales are forecast to slow and bottom out to a mere one per cent increase in 2018, says Trendex North America, a marketing research firm specializing in the clothing industry.

This year's sales are expected to grow by 2.4 per cent versus 3.8 per cent last year, slipping to 1.7 per cent growth in 2017 before inching back up to 2.1 per cent growth in 2020, Trendex said in a 2016 retail apparel market forecast.

The low Canadian dollar is going to put pressure on retailers' margins and force them to offset higher costs by hiking prices, perhaps by three to five per cent.

But the luxury segment should help ease the sluggishness in the low- to mid-priced sector as Saks Fifth Avenue makes its Canadian entry this month with the opening of two Toronto stores and U.S. retailer Nordstrom expands its presence with three new locations in Toronto.

The openings will give wealthier Canadians a reason to shop at home instead of travelling to global fashion centres such as New York while also attracting Americans looking to take advantage of the low loonie.

Artist sketch of the new Saks department stores, opening in Toronto this spring.
TORSTAR NEWS SERVICE

Increased competition will erode Holt Renfrew's dominance in the luxury segment at least initially as customers visit the new retail options, said Jean Rickli, a retail consultant for the J.C. Williams Group.

"If Nordstrom is true to their word on customer experience, it's going to be tough going for Holt Renfrew," he said.

THE CANADIAN PRESS

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HOUSEHOLD DEBT

Interest rate hike not only tool: BoC

The Bank of Canada's benchmark interest rate needs help in shoring up the financial system from growing risks like rising consumer indebtedness, deputy governor Timothy Lane said in a speech Monday.

Increased government spending, also known as fiscal stimulus, and regulatory changes to curb the accumulation of household debt are other tools that can be used alongside monetary policy, Lane said. "One thing is clear: monetary policy alone cannot be responsible for maintaining financial stability," he said in a speech at the HEC Montreal business school.

Lane said the central bank has identified the combination of climbing household debt and elevated house prices as the financial system's most concerning vulnerability. This weak spot has been exacerbated by the use of monetary policy, which has led to an extended era of low interest rates.

THE CANADIAN PRESS

metro VIEWS
Your essential daily news

PHILOSOPHER CAT by Jason Logan

Visible signs of inclusion are integral steps in abolishing the bias, fear and ignorance that lead to homophobia. Pride Tape is a simple, easy and low-cost way of announcing your support for the LGBTQ community.

— BRIAN BURKE

The Burke family is always looking for ways to show our support for the LGBTQ community. I was very excited when I met Jeff McLean, investor in Pride Tape, and thrilled when the Edmonton Oilers used it during their skills competition. We can't wait to bring it to Calgary once it is fully in production.

Visible signs of inclusion like these are integral steps in abolishing the bias, fear and ignorance that lead to homophobia. Through amazing initiatives and organizations such as Pride Tape, Pride parades, You Can Play and Canadian Safe Schools Network, steady progress is being made.

Pride Tape is cool because it's a simple, easy and low-cost way of announcing your support for the LGBTQ community in a team sports environment — the very message that You Can Play carries forward every day.

This issue has been vitally important to me since my late son, Brendan, came out to us all. Brendan was a wonderful young man and he came out in a very public and courageous way.

Since we lost Brendan, our family has been dedicated to furthering the causes and goals of the LGBTQ community. I am only sorry that this wasn't a priority for me much earlier in my life.

People ask me how they can help. I always tell them the same thing: Take three steps in your life. First, practise and teach acceptance in your home and workplace. The best thing about Brendan coming out was that I didn't have to take anything back. No hatred was allowed in my house. No racial humour, no homophobic language — nothing allowed. It was the same at work.

Second, take a positive, affirmative step on behalf of the group — join PFLAG, You Can Play or the Canadian Safe Schools Network. Volunteer. Write a cheque. Join a Gay-Straight Alliance. March in a Pride Parade. Engage with your local LGBTQ community. It's easy to say that you care — prove it!

And finally, work actively to end homophobia and bullying. Intervene if you can; report it if you can't.

I long for the day when these badges of honour and acceptance on behalf of the LGBTQ community are no longer necessary. But sadly, right now, they are. Join us in this fight against bias, fear and ignorance!

Brian Burke is the president of hockey operations for the Calgary Flames. He was the general manager of the Toronto Maple Leafs from 2008 to 2013.

METRO CALL TO ACTION
#PrideTape picks up steam

The colourful campaign to banish homophobia from hockey has support in high places — from NHL executives to generous investors — but it's up to Metro readers to help keep the movement in motion.

The Pride Tape Kickstarter campaign raised $76,147 — more than enough to make 10,000 rolls of rainbow-hued tape. Kris Wells, the professor who spearheaded the initiative, told Metro seven NHL teams have contacted the campaign directly or indirectly to inquire about Pride Tape.

Do you want your local teams — professional and amateur— to get on board with Pride Tape? Share this story on social media: #PrideTape

metroview

The voting reform idea you've never heard of

Norm Beach
For Metro

The first-past-the-post system is widely and justifiably criticized. After all, if you're a Tory in downtown Toronto or a Green supporter anywhere in Canada except Vancouver Island, it seems futile to cast an essentially "wasted" vote.

So millions stay home while millions of others hold their noses and choose someone they don't really want to deny power to someone they hate.

But there's a system under which voters could have their choices directly reflected in Parliament, without adding more MPs, altering electoral districts or setting off a Meech Lake-esque constitutional battle.

It's proportional parliamentary voting (PPV) and, like proportional representation, it's premised on the idea that each party's legislative power should be in proportion to its share of the popular vote.

Under PPV, when the House of Commons votes on an issue, MPs stand and vote individually, as they always have. But any party whose share of the popular vote is greater than its share of seats is awarded additional votes (on paper only — there are no additional MPs).

If this system had been put in place for this Parliament, the House of Commons would consist of 460 votes, with 231 required for a majority. The Grits would have their 184 MPs (their current number). The 99 Conservative MPs, who received 32 per cent of the popular vote, would get 48 additional parliamentary votes for a Conservative total of 147. (The NDP would have 92 votes; the Bloc, 23, the Greens, 14.)

We'd say goodbye to false majorities, strategic voting and "wasted" votes. Except for voters of parties with no seats, every vote would help the party the voter chooses get more power in Parliament.

The Parliament of Canada Act gives the House of Commons the exclusive power to establish its rules and procedures. It could make this change at the end of its mandate; for the next Parliament. This change would not affect the electoral system, so if Canadians don't want first-past-the-post, electoral reform would still be possible.

Clearly, though, proportional parliamentary voting would be a better way to guarantee that no vote is wasted. For the next election, let's finally make every vote count.

Norm Beach is a Toronto-based teacher and writer.

metro Your essential daily news

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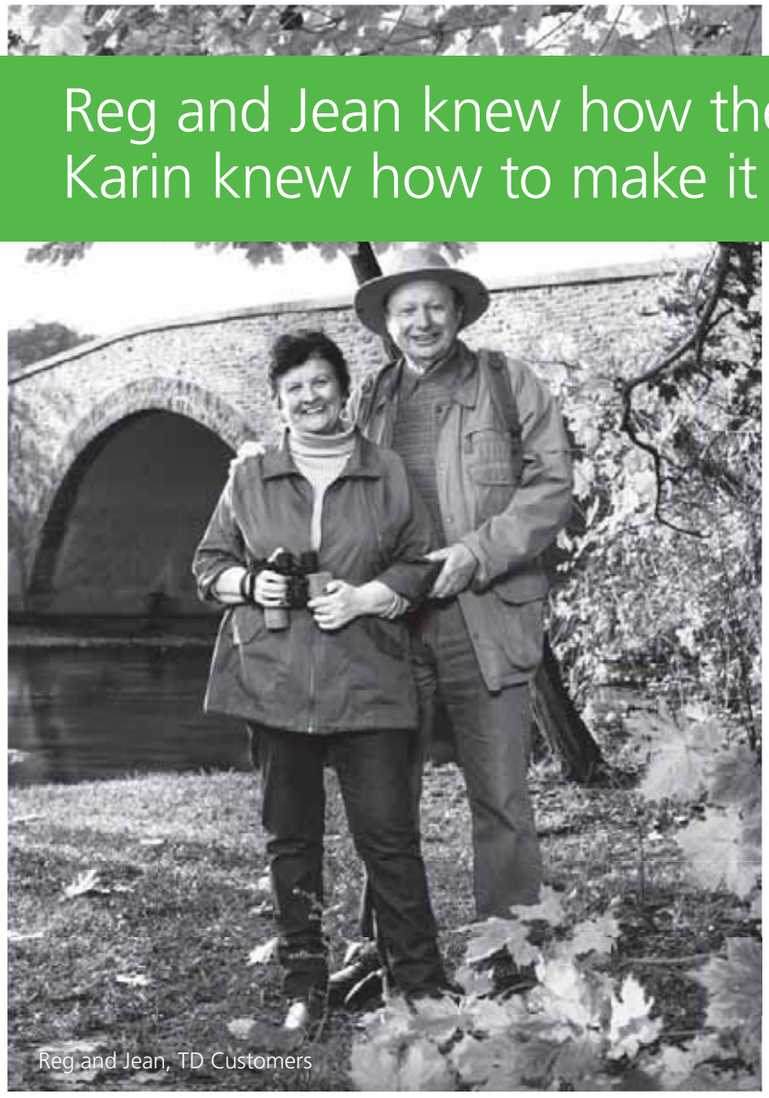

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Saving through uncertainty

NEST EGG

Putting some money away when income isn't steady

Michelle Williams

Not everyone has a job with a regular paycheque and benefits, including a group savings plan. In fact, in today's economy, more and more investors are dealing with instability in their workplace, forcing them to be committed and creative about saving for their retirement.

Proper investment advice can help you plan for retirement even when your earnings are inconsistent. ISTOCK

Working on contract

Ana Pereira, 46, is a project manager who is currently part-way through a five-month contract with Canadian Tire. She earns good money when she's working, but there are sometimes weeks or months between contracts where she has no income.

Pereira owns her home and has worked diligently to pay down her mortgage quickly. She also has a car and some RSP and TFSA savings. While she'd prefer a permanent position because of her financial commitments, the right opportunity has not yet come along.

She admits that during periods of unemployment between contracts, it's difficult to keep her head above water without dipping into savings.

According to Guy Anderson, senior financial consultant at Investment Planning Counsel, someone in Pereira's position should consider using some of the funds she's putting toward her mortgage to top up her TFSA and RSP savings and extend her mortgage payments over a longer period.

"That way, she has a safety net should she have periods of low cash flow due to unemployment between contracts," Anderson says.

Owning a small business

Lynton Friedman, 41, is a registered psychotherapist who practices hypnotherapy. He also owns Sanlyn Wellness Centre in Thornhill, Ont., teaching clients techniques to reduce anxiety, relax and break bad habits.

He's been in business for over 10 years and has recently gone through a period of high growth, but like any service business, there are some months where cash flow is low. While putting money back into his business is important to him, Friedman appreciates the need to be saving for his retirement.

"(He) is at a key time in his life and career to start making some serious strides in his retirement savings," says Anderson. He suggests Friedman talk to his advisor about leveraging RSP savings and the federal government's Home Buyers' Plan so he can purchase his first home.

"He can direct $25,000 from his RSP toward his home without tax penalty if he pays it back over 15 years," Anderson says.

Freelancing

Matthew Davies, 51, a freelance TV and film composer, experiences ups and downs in income due to music royalties. A few years back, he had a very good income year — but that came with big tax implications. His strategy was to put money into his RSP for the tax deferral, and he also purchased a spousal RSP, since his wife, Ginette, 43, was a stay-at-home mom.

Royalties are dwindling due to changes in the television industry, so Davies and his wife have opened a "spy birthday party" company, Undercover Kids. With startup costs and shrinking music royalties, cash flow continues to be a challenge while they get their new business going.

For them, Anderson suggests, their RSP savings are a handy emergency fund.

"Since three years have passed since the spousal RSP contribution, they can take it out and use it to help with their personal and business expenses," he says. "Because Ginette's income is still not very high, the taxes they're paying on the RSP withdrawal are minimal."

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TD

Delivering birth canal benefits

RESEARCH

Study may have found way to reduce risks to C-section babies

Babies delivered by C-section have a greater risk of developing asthma, allergies, Type 1 diabetes and obesity. TORSTAR NEWS SERVICE

GOOD GERMS By swabbing infants with birth fluids immediately after delivery by C-section, researchers found they could modify skin microbiota.

While passing through the birth canal, newborns are bathed in a mixture of their mothers' bacteria believed to play a role in boosting their immune systems and preventing disease.

So the implications for infants born by caesarean — who don't acquire those important microbes — has been a concern at a time when C-section rates have been rising, accounting for about 28 per cent of Canadian births.

Now a pilot study in the journal Nature Medicine has found there may be a solution.

Researchers reported they successfully transferred the immune-building microbial communities of mothers to their caesarean-born babies by swabbing them with birth fluids immediately after delivery.

"Our study is the first to demonstrate that partial microbiome restoration just after birth is possible in babies born by C-section," said microbiologist Maria Dominguez-Bello, associate professor at New York University's Langone Medical Center and lead author of the study, published last week.

While the study is small, involving only 18 mothers and babies, the results provide important evidence that the principle of transferring healthy bacteria is feasible, added co-author Jose Clemente, associate professor with the Icahn School of Medicine at Mount Sinai in New York.

By swabbing the infants immediately after delivery, "we can modify this skin-like microbiota that C-section babies usually get and make it resemble the microbiota of vaginally delivered infants," he said.

Over the first month of life, they found "significant differences" in the bacterial communities of those infants versus the babies born by caesarean but not swabbed.

This is not a procedure currently available for hospital births.

But the research lays the groundwork for future studies to see whether this kind of intervention can reduce the risks of developing such conditions as asthma, allergies, Type 1 diabetes and obesity, which have been associated with caesarean birth.

The pilot study included seven babies born vaginally and 11 by caesarean.

Four of the C-section babies had their mouths and bodies swabbed immediately after delivery with sterile gauze incubated in the mother's vagina an hour before surgery. The research team collected more than 1,500 samples from anal, oral and skin sites from mothers and babies over the next 30 days that they analyzed and compared.

The procedure included careful screening to ensure mothers were not carrying potentially harmful bacteria such as streptococcus B or other infectious bacteria or viruses.

The samples are part of a larger ongoing research project that includes 84 moms and babies who will be followed for a year after birth, said Dominguez-Bello.

But her team felt their initial findings should be reported earlier.

Research suggests that the first 100 days of life are crucial for developing a healthy gut bacteria, says Dr. Stuart Turvey, pediatrician at B.C. Children's Hospital and the University of British Columbia who has conducted researcher with the Canadian Microbiome Initiative.

So the study's findings that it's possible to change the structure of the microbial community in a baby's gut by intervening at birth is encouraging, he said.

It opens the door for researchers to identify healthy bacteria that might prevent diseases such as asthma and think about how to administer those to babies, he added.

"What's exciting about these strategies is they're looking to prevent disease."

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Ease screen strain with gentle eye yoga

If you spend more than two hours a day in front of a computer, you are at risk of developing computer vision syndrome, a group of vision-related problems that stem from computer use. Symptoms include: tired, itchy, irritated eyes; blurred vision and even headaches. This simple eye-yoga routine is designed to keep computer vision syndrome at bay. YUMEE CHUNG/TORSTAR NEWS SERVICE

EYESIGHT RESPITE

1. Sit tall with your head positioned over the shoulders and chin level with the floor. Fix your gaze at least six metres away.
2. Raise your eyes and gaze skyward for a slow inhale and an equally slow exhale. Lower your eyes and gaze at the earth for another full breath cycle.
3. Turn your eyes to the left and to the right, pausing to breathe at each location.
4. Vigorously rub your hands together until they heat up. Then lightly cup the warm palms over your closed eyes. Breathe deeply and relax into the soothing space behind your eyelids for at least five measured breaths.
5. Finish by using your hands to wipe down the face, throat and chest before blinking the eyes open and closed a few times.

12
The average person blinks 12 times per minute, but computer users blink only five times a minute.

JOHANNA SCHNELLER **WHAT I'M WATCHING**

Younger's sly laughs ring true

THE SHOW: Younger, Season One, Episode 3 (E/TV Land)
THE MOMENT: The Laugh

In Younger, Sutton Foster, left, plays a woman who gets to relive her 20s — and savour them this time. CONTRIBUTED

Liza (Sutton Foster) and Josh (Nico Tortorella) are finally kissing. She likes him, but she's been resisting this, because she has a secret. Divorced, broke, she was unable to get a job in book publishing until she began posing as someone his age, 26. She's 40.

The kissing escalates. Josh takes off his shirt. He's slim, muscular, covered in interesting tattoos. Liza bursts out laughing.

That laugh — equal parts nervous, amazed (that's how men look now?), and rueful (Liza and her husband had stopped having sex) — is what keeps Younger on the right side of the ridiculous/fun axis.

Show creator Darren Star (Sex and the City) traffics in frothy fantasies, and this one is a whopper: that a woman who rushed into adulthood can relive her 20s, and savour them this time. (Complete with a hipster wardrobe from SATC's costumer, Pat Field.)

Younger has its groaners. The 20-year-olds can be reductively narcissistic, the 40-year-olds bitter or clueless. But as he did on SATC, Star sneaks in several sly truths per episode about how our society pits women against one another, and makes us into our own worst enemies. "She's hit her head on the glass ceiling so many times she's got dementia," a 20-something says about her boss — a funny line, and a state many women know too well.

I also laughed at this one: "Dating in your 40s is like trying to rent out a beautiful apartment where a murder took place. Everyone is spooked." There was rue in my laugh, too.

Johanna Schneller is a media connoisseur who zeroes in on pop-culture moments. She appears Monday through Thursday.

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STUDY

Why women are more likely to 'catch' yawns

It's incredibly contagious, especially among tired coworkers and bleary-eyed airport travellers. Once someone does it, everyone around them is at risk of being infected.

The epidemic has circled the globe, and spreads rapidly during dark winter mornings and long business meetings. But according to a new study, women are more at risk than men.

A study published in the journal, Royal Society Open Science, by a group of researchers from the University of Pisa, Italy, suggests that although women and men yawn "spontaneously" at the same rate, women are more likely than men to "catch" yawns.

In other words women are more likely to yawn right after someone else near them has.

"We demonstrated that yawn contagion is gender affected," said Elisabetta Palagi, a behavioural biologist, and co-author of the study, over the phone from Pisa.

Palagi and her team believe that women are more likely to catch yawns than men because they are more empathetic and attuned to other people's emotions.

"This has a biological foundation because women have babies so they have to be extremely responsive to others' emotions," she said.

The team covertly observed more than a thousand bouts of yawning over a five-year period in train stations, airports and on the street, without people being aware that they were watched.

"We typed in mobile phones or wrote on notebooks, every yawn that was emitted by each person, the time and who could perceive it," wrote researcher Elisa Demuru in an email from Pisa.

"If a person who perceived a yawn yawned within a three-minute time slot, that yawn was considered as contagion."

Yawns that were not preceded by another yawn within five minutes were classified as "spontaneous."

The researchers even used their own friends as guinea pigs, secretly monitoring their yawns when they came over for dinner and drinks.

"They were at my house, so, no problem. It is (a) very, very cheap," way of doing research, said Palagi with a laugh.

The team also collected data on subjects in Madagascar, where they went to study lemurs for a different project.

The airport, Palagi said, was ideal for data collection as people standing in lineups would often cause a chain-yawn reaction.

The paper also found that people are more likely to catch yawns from friends, family or coworkers, than strangers.

It's not the first study to explore how empathy effects yawn contagion.

A 2015 Baylor University study found that psychopaths, who are known to have less empathy, are less likely to catch yawns than other people.

Palagi said future research could bring people into a lab for a more controlled experiment, or compare yawning between species.

She said she's always been fascinated by yawning, which she calls "a very strange behaviour."

"Yawning is contagious but why we spontaneously yawn it is another story," she said. "It is extremely difficult to understand."

She calls it, a "subtle and unconscious" form of communication.

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Should you really "feel the burn"? Is "no pain, no gain" actually true? Fitness experts weigh in. ISTOCK

Is there any truth to your workout mantra?

FITNESS

Separating fact from fiction: Fitness experts dissect clichés

Anyone who works out knows clichés come with the territory. You're often told to "feel the burn" and realize "no pain, no gain" — but just because a phrase is common doesn't mean it's true.

We asked personal trainers and fitness experts — Kathleen Trotter, Stephanie Joanne and Sarah Robichaud — to weigh in on five fitness clichés to separate fact from fiction.

F "No pain, no gain."

Totally false. Fitness experts say pain is a sign something is going wrong — maybe it's your form, or you're pushing yourself too hard. Whatever the case, it's not a good thing.

"The idea of negative, harmful pain being positive is never true," says Trotter.

You don't have to be sore the next day either to get results, adds Joanne. "It's almost the opposite of what I would want anyone to do," she says.

It's all about knowing the line between pushing your body to its limits and feeling that muscle sensation, versus real pain that comes from hurting yourself during a workout.

T "Feel the burn."

Sometimes true. There's pain (bad) and then there's that burning sensation that often accompanies a workout (not necessarily bad.) It's fine to push yourself to the point of fatigue during exercise, says Robichaud.

"I know I'm fatigued when I feel that burning sensation in my body — the lactic acid build-up — but never to the point of pain or sacrificing your form," she adds.

Feeling the "burn" isn't necessary to see results, notes Joanne, but it can provide a psychological boost.

T "You are what you eat."

Mostly true. If you're opting for cake instead of broccoli, you'll definitely feel different after. But experts say the truth is more nuanced that this cliché.

"If you're eating foods that are heavy and fat-laden, and sugar-laden, you are going to feel heavy and you will develop fat on your body," says Robichaud.

And, if you're spending time in the gym but not eating well, you won't get results, adds Joanne.

However, if your digestive system is out of whack, that might mean you're not getting nutrients properly — regardless of what you eat — says Trotter.

T "It never gets easier — you just get stronger."

Sometimes true. This cliché depends on the situation, says Trotter. A beginner runner, for instance, might run 5 kilometres in 40 minutes.

"In a year, hopefully you can run it in 30 minutes, and that's going to feel like what you've done in 40," she says. "It's easier — because you're more fit."

When you're pumping iron, things get easier as you strengthen your muscles. "As you tear up muscle fibres in your workout, and then you recover, they come back together even stronger," says Robichaud. The stronger you get, the harder you can work – so in that sense, it's never getting any easier.

T "The only bad workout is no workout."

Totally true. All three experts agreed. "Any movement, even if you just go for a walk and get yourself out of that sedentary mindset, is better than nothing," says Joanne.

In the fitness world, there's a constant pursuit of perfection, but Trotter says people need to shake that — it's not about the "perfect" workout, since something is better than nothing.

"You'll never regret being active," says Robichaud.

TORSTAR NEWS SERVICE

metro SPORTS

The Knicks fired coach Derek Fisher, who accumulated a 40-96 record in a season and a half in New York

HOCKEY

Giants fend off Oil Kings
Ben Thomas broke a scoreless tie late in the third period with a power-play goal, which was the only scoring the Vancouver Giants needed against the Edmonton Oil Kings on Monday.

Thomas scored his seventh of the season with just over seven minutes remaining in regulation to give the Giants a 1-0 win.

The Giants remain last in the WHL's Western Conference, six points out of the final playoff spot.

The Giants host the Kamloops Blazers on Friday. METRO

Jets sign Byfuglien to a five-year extension
Big Buff is off the NHL free-agent market.

NHL teams looking to add a rental defenceman before the trade deadline will have to look elsewhere as the Winnipeg Jets signed Dustin Byfuglien to a $38-million US, five-year extension.

THE CANADIAN PRESS

Crosby cooks Ducks with a four-point night
Sidney Crosby scored on a pair of breakaways to extend his goal streak to a career-best seven games and added two assists to help the Pittsburgh Penguins continue their surge with a 6-2 win over the Anaheim Ducks on Monday night.

Crosby, mired in a massive slump early in the year, now has 53 points in 51 games.

THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

Lulay staying in The Den

LIONS

Veteran QB signs two-year deal to serve as team's backup

Cam Tucker
Metro | Vancouver

For the B.C. Lions, bringing back quarterback Travis Lulay only makes sense.

He can continue to provide the mentorship of a veteran player who has been there, done that in the Canadian Football League to one of their potential up-and-coming stars in fellow pivot Jonathon Jennings. Lulay is capable of being prepared to enter a game and providing the qualities of a starter, even if injuries have plagued him since 2012 — the year after he won Grey Cup MVP.

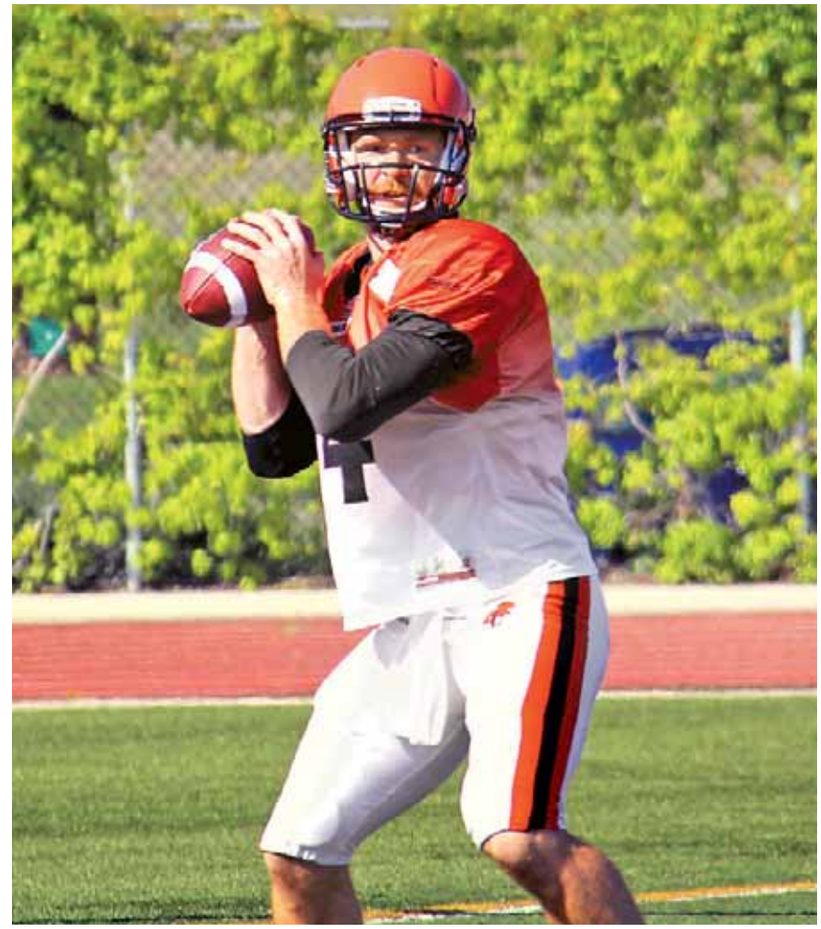
His reach as a leader in the locker-room also goes beyond his peers — Jennings and Greg McGhee, who will both enter their second CFL seasons — in the quarterback fraternity to players at different positions, backgrounds and levels of experience.

Again. It makes sense.

The Lions and Lulay inked a two-year contract extension on Monday, the day before the start of CFL free agency.

"Really, after Christmas, we were hopeful we'd be able to get something done and not make the decision to go somewhere else," Lulay, 32, told Metro.

Speaking to Metro in a phone interview, head coach and general manager Wally Buono declined to talk contract specifics, however, dating back to the end of last season, it was believed Lulay would have to take a different role and a subsequent pay cut from the reported $450,000 per season he signed for in 2013.



Travis Lulay, a former Grey Cup MVP, is expected to continue mentoring starting quarterback Jonathon Jennings. CAM TUCKER/METRO

From Buono's standpoint, the motivation was to strengthen the quarterback position and he believes he's done that by bringing Lulay back.

Buono also said the relationship formed between Lulay and Jennings, and Lulay and McGhee, is critical to the growth at the quarterback position.

"You develop this book of experience and what good is it to just hold it all inside? You want to share it," said Lulay, who enters his eighth CFL season.

With training camp four months away, Jennings will enter as the incumbent starter, followed by Lulay and McGhee.

Last year when Lulay returned from injury and was moved to the backup position behind Jennings, there wasn't even the slightest hint or suggestion of a quarterback controversy.

Lulay expects much of the same in 2016.

"There was never an issue, nor will there be moving forward."

RETURN GAME

Lions hope to re-sign running back Rainey
The Lions were, as of Monday afternoon, still working to get pending free agent running back Chris Rainey signed.

Born in Lakeland, Fla., Rainey is 27 years old. He signed with the Leos midway through the 2015 season and was an instant game-changer on special teams in the return game.

Last week, Buono said the Leos wouldn't be offering Canadian tailback Andrew Harris a contract offer, which sets him free on the open market.

WHITECAPS

Robinson focused on Perez the scorer, not the villain

When there's a feature video of an athlete that starts the title with the words "hero" and "villain," it's a safe bet that individual isn't universally liked.

For example: "HERO & VILLAIN: The two sides of Panamanian forward Blas Perez" is a video featured on Major League Soccer's YouTube channel, depicting the polarizing figure that is currently at Vancouver Whitecaps training camp.

The Whitecaps have yet to officially announce a deal with Perez, who turns 35 years old next month. He played in the club's second pre-season game, adding an assist.

Head coach Carl Robinson said the team doesn't need to clear cap space in order to sign Perez.

Perez may never escape the narrative that he's both a villain and a hero.

> **"If we manage to (sign) Blas and he comes in and helps us win games … than that's what it's about.** Whitecaps head coach Carl Robinson

He was once an integral part of an FC Dallas team that always seemed to be getting under the skin of the Whitecaps and their supporters — and vice versa — while scoring 36 times in 97 career MLS games prior to this year.

The latter part of that, and how it can help the Whitecaps win, seems like the priority for Robinson.

"When I look at players … I try and put my neutral hat on," said Robinson in a conference call.

"Do I take notice of it? Yes, I do. Of course I do because you have to. But is it going to be a big concern for me? No, because if we manage to (sign) Blas and he comes in and helps us win games … than that's what it's about."

CAM TUCKER/METRO

Blas Perez GETTY IMAGES FILE

NBA

Raptors fire on all cylinders vs. Pistons

Kyle Lowry scored 25 points, and the Toronto Raptors went on an 11-2 run at the start of the fourth quarter to pull away for their 14th victory in 15 games, 103-89 over the Detroit Pistons on Monday night.

Terrence Ross added 18 points for the Raptors, who recovered quickly after Detroit's Andre Drummond made a shot from about 80 feet to end the third quarter. Toronto led 70-65 at the start of the fourth, and Lowry's driving three-point play set the tone for the final period. The Atlantic Division-leading Raptors eventually turned the game into a rout, to the delight of their fans. Drummond had 12 points and 13 rebounds for the Pistons.

Toronto was up 49-43 at the half, and although the Raptors looked like they were in control at 62-49 in the third, Detroit scored nine straight points to get back in it. Drummond's long shot to end the third was only the third three-pointer of his career, but the Pistons couldn't build on it. Lowry and Patrick Patterson made threes early in the fourth to give Toronto an 81-67 advantage, and Detroit was never closer than nine after that. THE CANADIAN PRESS

Raps' DeMar DeRozan drives for a layup. THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

MONDAY in Detroit

103	89
RAPTORS	PISTONS

NFL IN BRIEF

Lawyer: Manziel ruptured ex's eardrum in assault

Johnny Manziel's ex-girlfriend says in an affidavit that he hit her so hard during a late-night confrontation that she lost hearing in one ear.

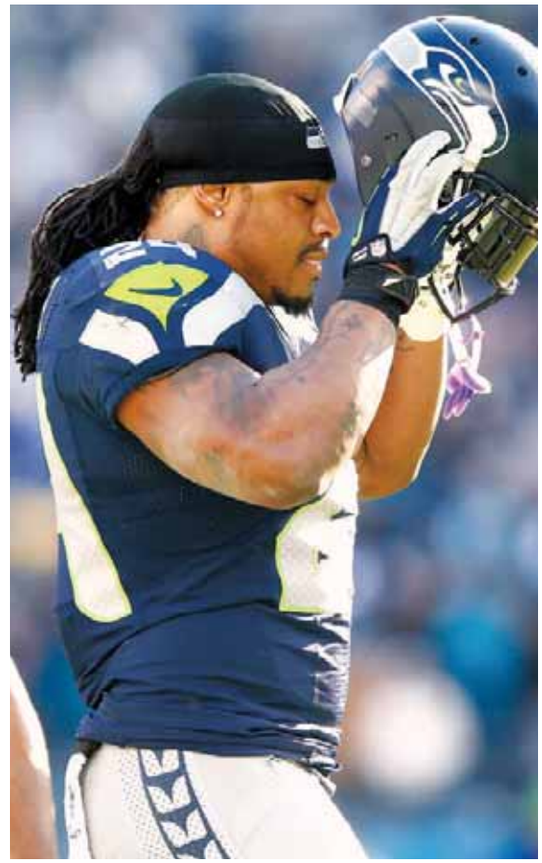
As part of proceedings to obtain a protective order, Colleen Crowley suffered a ruptured eardrum, her lawyer revealed. THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

Super Bowl ratings down from the last two years

Super Bowl 50 reached an average of 111.9 million viewers, a number down from the past two years.

Still, it represents the third most-watched television event in U.S. history. The Super Bowl had set viewership records for six of the past seven years. THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

Seattle legend Lynch announces retirement



The Seahawks' Marshawn Lynch looks on during the NFC divisional playoff game against the Carolina Panthers on Jan. 17 in Charlotte, N.C. JAIME SQUIRE/GETTY IMAGES

NFL

Agent confirms mercurial RB Marshawn will call it a career

When Marshawn Lynch was brought to Seattle early in the 2010 season, he was acquired because the Seahawks desperately needed a running back.

What he ended up providing was an attitude and style that became the foundation for bringing the first Super Bowl title to the Pacific Northwest. And for that, Lynch will forever hold a special place with the Seahawks. He may have been more of a headache off the field than anyone let on during his time in Seattle, but he'll ultimately be lauded as the running back that got the Seahawks to a place they had never been before.

Without saying a word — big surprise — Lynch drew a lot of attention during the fourth quarter of the Super Bowl on Sunday night with a single post on social media. Just a picture, green cleats hanging from a power or telephone line, and a peace sign emoji. It was his way of saying goodbye from football, a decision that his agent Doug Hendrickson confirmed to The Associated Press on Monday saying Lynch intends to retire.

The mercurial running back who enjoyed avoiding media attention away from the field as much as he thrived under the spotlight with the ball in his hands is stepping away just before his 30th birthday.

"Since I've been here he's been the heart and soul, the engine of our offence. A vocal leader. A great influence and one of the best teammates I've ever had," Seattle wide receiver Doug Baldwin said last month of Lynch. "I can't say enough about him." His final season was an injury-filled disappointment. There were no "Beast Mode" runs in his final season that will forever be in his highlight loop or the image of Lynch leaping into the end zone backward as he did to cap a few great runs in his career. He was a spectator as much as anything, playing in just seven regular season games and one playoff game as injuries were finally a factor in his ability to play.

But as much credit as coach Pete Carroll and general manager John Schneider deserve for what Seattle has become as a perennial power in the NFC, Lynch deserves his share for the demeanour he provided the Seahawks. Lynch will step aside after nine seasons in the league. Six of those came in Seattle, where he played in the post-season five times. He's second all-time in Seattle history in rushing touchdowns and fourth in yards rushing. He tied for the NFL lead in rushing touchdowns in 2013 and 2014 and is No. 8 all-time in total yards rushing during the post-season. THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

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RECIPE Roasted Chicken and Grapes

PHOTO: MAYA VISNYEI

Ceri Marsh & Laura Keogh
For Metro Canada

This unusual combination delivers amazing flavour, both savoury and sweet. It's posh enough to serve to guests but simple enough to whip up on any weeknight evening.

Ready in
Prep time: 5 minutes
Total time: 30 minutes
Serves 4

Ingredients
- 1 Tbsp olive oil
- 4 chicken thighs
- 2 shallots, sliced
- 3 cloves of garlic, minced
- 3 cups red seedless grapes
- 1 cup chicken stock
- 1 Tbsp balsamic vinegar
- 1 Tbsp brown sugar
- 2 Tbsp dried thyme

Directions
1. Preheat the oven to 400 F.
2. In a large, oven-safe skillet, warm up olive oil over medium high heat. Brown — but don't cook through — the chicken thighs, about 3 minutes each side. Remove the chicken from the skillet and place on a clean plate.
3. Reduce the heat under the skillet to medium and toss in the shallots and garlic. Cook for about 3 minutes until they soften. Add the grapes, stock, vinegar, sugar and thyme and give everything a good stir. Allow the sauce to begin to simmer.
4. Nestle the chicken pieces into the sauce and place the skillet in the oven. Bake for 20 minutes.
5. Serve over couscous, mashed potatoes or polenta.

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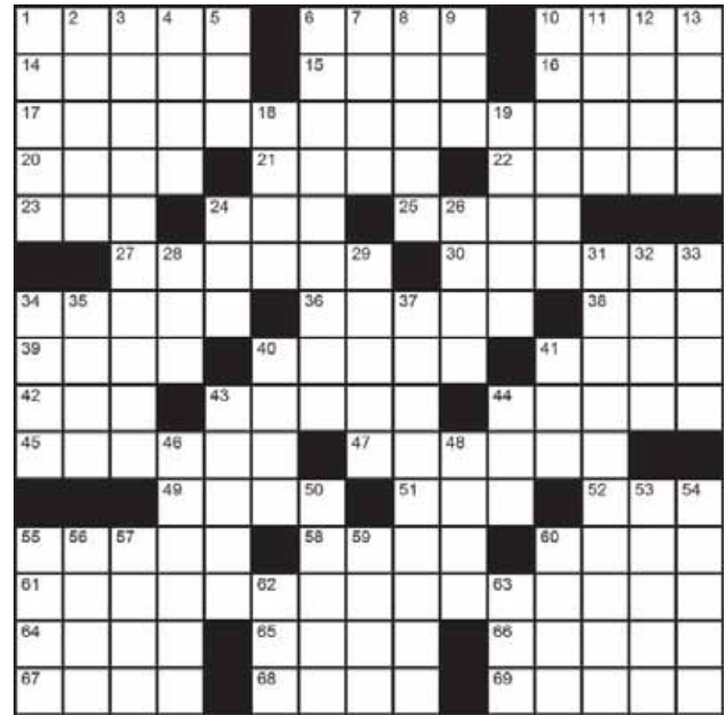
CROSSWORD Canada Across and Down

BY KELLY ANN BUCHANAN



ACROSS
1. Domesticated
6. Vroom, vroom... __ 500
10. Radiate
14. Ms. Cara
15. Drill hole
16. When Jimmy Kimmel is on
17. First World War munitions: 2 wds.
20. Route
21. Aloud
22. Elongated circles
23. Cobbler's tool
24. __ Epstein (Gregory Smith's role on "Rookie Blue" on Global TV)
25. Animal-powered plow contraption
27. "Would you stop already.": 2 wds.
30. Hertz pickup
34. Curved music symbols
36. Elizabeth's nickname, perhaps
38. Annie Lennox's inquisitive hit of 1992
39. Ardent
40. Pesky pet problems
41. Marcel Marceau's job title
42. "You're All __ Got Tonight" by The Cars
43. Military officer, e.g.
44. Ms. Winslet's
45. Grammar topic
47. Afraid
49. Twisted-apart cookie
51. Froms opposites
52. Gives birth
55. Is performing really well
58. Subatomic particle
60. Pinnacle
61. Queen Elizabeth's attendants
64. Allied group
65. Feed the poker kitty
66. Like a TV show that should have been airing: 2 wds.
67. Shakespeare play title starter
68. Madonna's "Live to __"
69. __ __ relax (Calm down)

DOWN
1. Fairytale accessory
2. Bow and what?
3. Album of 1984 by Canadian singing star Lee Aaron: 2 wds.
4. British novelist Ms. Bagnold
5. Wilmington's state [abbr.]
6. Mount Caubvick aka Mont d'__ (High peak on the Quebec/Labrador border)
7. Ms. Ephron
8. Laconically
9. Agreeable answer
10. Ten-plus-one
11. __ fide (In bad faith)
12. "__ take a few days." (Waiting-for-something time span)
13. Nastassja Kinski title role
18. Swag
19. Cornball
24. Insult in a hip way
26. Eyeballs
28. Vase variety
29. Daily commute delay cause: 2 wds.
31. Canadian comedy series which starred Don McKellar and Molly Parker: 2 wds.
32. Wistfully sighed phrase: 2 wds.
33. Caustics
34. Locomotes the slopes
35. Canadian comic actor Eugene
37. Showerer's dryer-offer: 2 wds.
40. Obsession, idee __
41. Avril's follower
43. Big
44. PC information units
46. Music chord types
48. Mrs. Chaplin (Charlie's last wife)
50. Speak out
53. "Are too." retort: 2 wds.
54. Musical repetition mark
55. Actress Jessica
56. Referee's decision
57. Matinee star
59. Global, for short
60. Suffix with 'Origin'
62. Roosted
63. Chg. card percentage

IT'S ALL IN THE STARS by Sally Brompton

Aries March 21 - April 20
If you let things slip, you'll be struggling to catch up for the rest of the week. Stay on top of your workload, no matter how boring it may be.

Taurus April 21 - May 21
You can get twice as much done in half the time it takes most other people but that doesn't mean you should. If anything you should be cutting back a bit now. Keep doing it all and others will expect it of you.

Gemini May 22 - June 21
Why are some people so irritable? You won't change them, so don't waste time trying. Today's influences will bring out the worst in those who lack self-control, but it will bring out the best in you.

Cancer June 22 - July 23
The weather in your neck of the cosmic woods may get a bit blowy today but the long-term forecast is good, so sit tight and ride out the storm. Come the weekend your world will be a brighter and sunnier place.

Leo July 24 - Aug. 23
You may be eager to show what you can do but you would be wise not to rush things. If you act too soon, you may only get half what you could have earned if you had waited a day.

Virgo Aug. 24 - Sept. 23
Have a clear idea of what it is you are aiming for, otherwise you will waste a lot of time and energy on things that don't matter. Make a conscious decision not to get carried away.

Libra Sept. 24 - Oct. 23
It may seem as if all sorts of things are going wrong at the moment but it isn't true — relatively speaking your life is a huge success. If you want to be inspired take a look at those who really do have to struggle to get things done.

Scorpio Oct. 24 - Nov. 22
Listen to friends today. They have a wealth of experience that can be used to sidestep the pitfalls that will appear along your path.

Sagittarius Nov. 23 - Dec. 21
You can make a name for yourself but only if you are prepared to give up the things that are holding you back. Anything that takes up too much of time, or money, must go.

Capricorn Dec. 22 - Jan. 20
If you're planning a trip check and make sure there's nothing that could hold you back. Allow more time for your journey. You'll reach your destination but it may take a while.

Aquarius Jan. 21 - Feb. 19
Is there some kind of conspiracy that is stopping you from reaching your goal? Maybe there is but more likely it's just your mind playing tricks on you. By all means be wary but don't make accusations.

Pisces Feb. 20 - March 20
It is inevitable that you will encounter some kind of resistance. It may be emotional resistance or it may be physical but either way you'll have to find an alternative route.

CONCEPTIS SUDOKU by Dave Green

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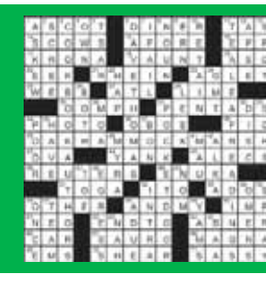

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